



## RE EVENING SONG

The EVENING SONG is excellently translated. It fills a need in the American literature and will be of value to the American Lithuanians. Your translation is easy and clear and shows a true understanding of the Lithuanian national spirit. **Naujienos** (The Lith. Daily News, Chicago) said the truth when they wrote that you are the only Lithuanian who is able to interpret the Lithuanian soul in an English translation.

Once again I wish to express that, indeed, you are above all other Lithuanians. You have come here not knowing the language, and you have learned the dances of many nations. Twice have you overcome mortal and incurable ailments and are still able to continue in your beloved work. I, therefore, say you are a man worthy of honor. (Translated from Lith.).

J. V. Stanis  
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

Our sincere congratulations for the excellent work that you have done in your composition of the EVENING SONG. As an author you show forth not only the nobility of your own personality, but likewise the culture of the Lithuanian people worthy of admiration.

We wish you continued success. May God bless you with His precious gifts of health and happiness and inspire you with greater achievements.

Sincerely yours,  
Sister M. Anastasia, Superior  
Sisters of St. Casimir  
Chicago, Ill.

## WEST COAST VS EAST COAST KOLO-NIZATION

Mr. Herman is to be commended for holding Kolo Jamborees in his "neck of the woods", but to imply that the San Franciscan Kolo Festival was a result of his venture in New York is not true. There is absolutely no connection between the two. Three years ago John Filcich and his friends wanting to do something for a very special friend of theirs—and in what other way would a teacher of Yugoslav dances and folklore concretely do this? Naturally—a Yugoslav dance festival. Having been an integral part of these festivals for the past three years I can safely say I know what I am talking about. "Hands across the continent" as far as both east and west having affairs devoted to Yugoslav folklore on the same Thanksgiving weekend is concerned. But one does NOT stem from the other.

Another sore point is the all too inclusive statement, "We are Kolo-nizing America!" Laurels to the Hermans and other eastern leaders who have promoted Yugoslav dancing and folklore, but ask any folk dancer from California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, etc., who Kolonized them. Answer? Vyts Beliajus and John Filcich.

Cecilia Benrath  
San Francisco, Wash.

## From Rabbi Jacobs

Now that I have had an opportunity to peruse the Tercentenary Issue of VILTIS, I want to drop a line and to congratulate you on beautiful job well done.

The entire issue is in very good taste and reveals a tremendous amount of work on your part. You have every reason to be proud of all the fine results which together constitute this special edition.

Sidney J. Jacobs  
Rabbi of Niles Township  
Skokie, Ill.

## The Dance Situation

You are right—we have entirely too much jitterbug mixed up with square dancing and no doubt in other forms of dancing. We have a state university here of about 4,000 and their all-campus square dances are abominable. So much twisting and twirling to try to cover up for not knowing anything about square dancing. The more you horse around the better impression you make.

Naomi Rawn Greenfield  
Bowling Green, Ohio

Enjoy your VILTIS a lot. The folk culture information is superb and I especially like your evaluation of the folk dance exhibitions put on at festivals. You are an excellent critic and this is the sort of constructive criticism we get nowhere else. Keep it up.

Lindy Landauer  
Pasadena, Calif.

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Above we see three folk dance leaders, Lisa and Walter Lekis and Wilma Linscott. Wilma (Mrs. Mark) in Hungarian costume, is the leader of the Bakersfield folk dancers. Her Circle 8 won excellent notice for their presentations. Lisa and Walter Lekis, who now temporarily live in Florida, are the foremost connoisseurs in Caribbean and South American dancing. They have accomplished a great many deeds in a brief period. Sponsored the first (and thus far only) Caribbean folk festival which achieved world-wide notice, recorded many LP records of Caribbean music and are terrific dancers with a keen understanding of the Carib mind.

We met Lisa a dozen years ago at the International House of the Chicago University. Even then she had a burning love and a great flair for the South American dance. There she met Walter Lekis, a Lithuanian youth originally from the Bridgeport Lith section in Chicago where yours truly also grew up. Walter studied engineering at that time. This seemed to have been a fortunate meeting for they make a wonderful couple. Walter converses well in Lithuanian and he also makes a good Carib. Lisa is now working on her doctorate in Cultural Anthropology. She is also working on a book to be called: "Contemporary Survey of Latin American Ethnic Dances." Geriausios sekmes to both of you. (Foto Fin).



## A BOOK REVIEW BY EFREN REVELES

THE EVENING SONG (VAKARINĖ DAINA), by Vytautas F. Beliajus, (Bonnie Press, Los Angeles, \$3.00), provides hours of entertaining, never-to-be-forgotten reading. But the book serves a more noble purpose than the mere re-telling of ancient Lithuanian legends; it reflects the voice of a small nation engrossed in an age-old struggle to defend its rightful heritage. The reader is somehow reassured that the 3,000,000-odd Lithuanians behind Russia's Iron Curtain today are extolling the beauty and tenderness of the native songs, dances, and folktales with a spirit like that of their fore-fathers generations ago.

One can hardly grasp the full significance of THE EVENING SONG in today's Free World, without considering the history of the Southernmost Baltic state, Lithuania. It goes back to 1410 when the Poles and Lithuanians combined forces to defeat the Teutonic Knights of Germany at Tannenberg, extending their power far into Russian territory. In 1795, however, following the third partition with Poland, Lithuania fell into Russian hands and did not regain its independence until 1918, toward the end of World War I. During the occupation, the Russian government sought to restrain communication between the native patriots by enacting legislation prohibiting the printing and publishing of the Lithuanian language. This horrendous law threatened to destroy even the seed from which bloomed the flower of Lithuanian culture! This resulted in a quite natural retaliation by the people in the form of secret meetings where the young people were instructed in the Lithuanian language, and where were passed on by the oldsters the old Lithuanian songs (dainos) and native legends (pasakos). Thus, despite personal danger to their lives and liberty, the Lithuanians saved not only the language from extinction, but also their songs and dances, and the legends in Mr. Beliajus' THE EVENING SONG.

It is ironic that in 1955 Vytautas Beliajus assumes a role similar to that of his forefathers, those gallant self-made schoolmasters of the 18th and 19th centuries who preserved the heritage of Lithuania. In THE EVENING SONG he presents the legends of his native land in English for the first time, bringing the wisdom of the ancient tales to American readers, truly an echo of Lithuania itself.

The stories themselves are chockfull of Lithuanistica and end with a note of hope. We learn of a gentle people's culture and their aspirations, and read of customs and beliefs deeply rooted in antiquity such as the significance of the virginal rue, the cuckoo bird's omen, and the raven's tearful message of hearts separated by death. The stories are told with the charming plaintiveness of the DAINA, that Lithuanian folksong which rings clear and true with tender sentiments.

Mr. Beliajus has succeeded in the difficult task of retaining the poetic loveliness of the Lithuanian language in his translation. The physical beauty of the book is further enhanced by appropriate pen-and-ink drawings by Louis Denov.

Obviously, it is Mr. Beliajus' prayer that THE EVENING SONG may serve to keep his native legends glowing in the hearts of young and old alike for many more centuries to come.

Long Playing Records: Isreal Motif. Federation for Jewish Service, 101 N. 20th St., Omaha 2, Neb. (Gratis).

The Jewish Community Center in Omaha, Neb., is a center in the true sense of the word. Various services are housed there, including a Jewish and Judaica library. Under the directorship of Paul Veret many phases have been added. Paul is folklore minded and through the Federation For Jewish Service they recently printed the most complete listing of all Israeli dances and songs which will be a useful guide to anyone interested. This pamphlet may be obtained free by writing to Paul Veret at the above address.

They are now in the midst of preparation a similar pamphlet for Judeo-Isreali dances appearing in printed form. Each title will show in which book or books it may be found.

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Medžio Drožimai Gimtajam Kraštui Atsiminti—Wood Carving in Recollection of the Land of Birth. In Lithuanian and English, Ignas Končius. Boston, Mass. 224 pp. \$5.00.

People interested in the folk form of wood carving will be delighted with this book containing over a hundred well-photographed plates of the creations of Ignas Končius who, since his days of dispersion from his beloved land of birth, carved from memory scenes of shrines and wayside crosses for which Lithuania is so famous. The beauty and the creativity of every item is something to marvel at, even for the uninitiated person. The soul of the Lithuanian peasant went into the fashioning of the cross. It was his way of glorifying God in the holiness of beauty and in that he succeeded. The author, when still in Lithuania, found in one area alone 3234 crosses and shrines of which 1386 were just ornate crosses without any particular dedication, 735 dedicated to the Ever Blessed Virgin, several hundred to a number of saints and the rest to Christ in various manifestations, of which 82 were to the peculiar Lithuanian "Pensive Christ—Rūpintojėlis". Copies may be obtained from L. J. Končius, 76 Westglow St., Dorchester 22, Mass.

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## Have You Acquired "THE EVENING SONG?"

### The first of its kind in English!

You Will Gain New Appreciation For a People  
Not Too Well Known To You

The EVENING SONG Is a Charming Collection  
of Lithuanian Folk Tales, Legends and Fables  
The legends are charming, poetic and fascinating.  
The fables and tales are humorous or moralistic.  
Each item entertaining reading for every age group.  
*Beautifully Executed Illustrations by Louis Denov.*

Forewords by

Josephine Daužvardis, Lawton Harris and the Author  
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